

VZCZCXRO4402

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DE RUEHVB #0268/01 1341342  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 141342Z MAY 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9217  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000268

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD, EUR/RPM, EUR/ERA, AND G/TIP  
OSD FOR POPOVICH

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - MAY 14, 2009

REF: A. ZAGREB 259

[1](#)B. ZAGREB 229

[1](#)C. MEGES-WESTLEY 3/12/2009 E-MAIL

[1](#)1. (U) GOVERNMENT HOLDS SEMINAR ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS  
AND PRESENTS NEW NATIONAL PLAN:

The head of the Government's Office for Human Rights and National Coordinator for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons, Luka Maderic, held a two-day seminar this week in coordination with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to educate and train mobile team members and present the National Plan for Combating Trafficking for 2009-2011. Mobile-teams are a vital part of the Croatian response network for trafficking victims and are made up of volunteers who immediately assist victims as soon as they are identified. On March 25, parliament adopted a new National Plan for Combating Trafficking for 2009-2011. The plan continues many of the mechanisms already in place to assist victims and prevent trafficking, but also establishes clearer protocols on the voluntary repatriation of foreign victims. According to Mr. Maderic although historically women have been most at risk for trafficking, Croatia has seen an increase in men trafficked for the purpose of labor exploitation. He claimed that no area of the country was immune from the threat and that the risk of trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation is increasing as Croatia enters the summer tourist season. (JNCallahan)

[1](#)2. (U) FORMER CROATIAN POLICEMAN WILL SERVE 20 YEARS FOR  
TRIPLE MURDER:

On April 9, 2009, the Supreme Court confirmed a July 2008 ruling by the Osijek County Court finding Antun Gudelj guilty of killing the local police chief, Josip Reihl-Kir, and two ethnic Serb politicians in July 1991, and of attempting to kill another Serbian local politician. The county court sentenced Gudelj to 20 years in prison after he admitted the killings but claimed he thought the car was driven by armed Serb rebels who ignored his calls to stop. Reihl-Kir and the Serb politicians were shot dead in an ambush while on their way to talks with Serb rebels who opposed Croatia's declaration of independence. Gudelj was convicted in absentia in 1994, extradited from Germany for retrial in 1996, and granted amnesty by the Supreme Court in 1997. In 2001, the Constitutional Court invalidated the amnesty. Gudelj was extradited from Australia in 2007, where he had been living since receiving amnesty. (VDjukic)

[1](#)3. (U) ELECTION WILDCARDS IN PLAY FOR SUNDAY VOTE:

The Catholic Church on Sunday, May 10 issued a statement that urged the faithful to vote in the upcoming local elections on May 17, to support candidates that favored the current ban on Sunday work, and criticized politicians that the church perceives as diminishing the crimes during communist times. Local media was quick to point out that this message was widely seen as a call to back the candidates of the Croatian

Democratic Union (HDZ). In the campaign, Prime Minister and HDZ chief Ivo Sanader has been trumpeting the HDZ,s conservative social values in order to energize its base. The message should also resonate with the supporters of the HDZ,s main coalition partner, the Croatian Peasant Party. Additionally, the HDZ has lashed out against a "conspiracy" of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), in fomenting recent student strikes and a public workers, strike, and for influencing the timing of the guilty verdict for right-wing war criminal Branimir Glavas (REF A), all of which have hurt the HDZ politically. The Glavas verdict is almost certain to increase the sympathy vote for Glavas, party in eastern Croatia, while the labor and student protests probably will strengthen the SDP chances with undecided voters, who may view the social discord as a result of the HDZ,s poor management of the economy. However, we still expect the results of these elections for mayors, county prefects, and city and county councils to give both the HDZ and SDP a chance to claim significant electoral support (REFS B and C).

14. (U) CROATIAN NGOS GEAR UP TO MONITOR LOCAL ELECTIONS: Croatia's premier democracy-oriented NGO, GONG, has announced that this weekend's elections would be monitored by 1,000 GONG-trained observers and 105 mobile teams, and would do its best to cover as many of the nearly 7,000 polling stations as possible. Since only voters registered at addresses within Croatia can vote in local elections, there will be no polling stations for the diaspora in Bosnia or elsewhere. GONG observers will primarily focus on the respect of the elections laws and identifying any irregularities. Some local analysts have alleged that voter rolls in some border localities include lots of voters who do not actually live in

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those places. Political parties are also expected to deploy election observers. (DMeges)

15. (U) DCM SPEAKS AT CROATIAN DIPLOMATIC ACADEMY CONFERENCE: Deputy Chief of Mission Vivian Walker spoke on "Women in Diplomacy" at a conference hosted in Dubrovnik on May 8, by the Croatian Diplomatic Academy. The participants included directors and students of Diplomatic Academies and Embassies from 18 countries. Beyond exploring themes related to the diplomatic life and career, the DCM also responded to questions on various aspects of U.S. policy and gave a brief interview to Radio Dubrovnik which aired as part of a story on the conference. The Director of the Diplomatic Academy said next year's conference will focus on strategic public diplomacy, and asked if the Embassy would again assist with the program. (MCrnjakovic/KWetzel)

16. (U) PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONTINUES OUTREACH ON NATO ISSUES: Embassy PA staff traveled this week to the towns of Gracac and Karlovac and met with high school students to discuss 60 years of NATO history and the meaning of Croatia's full membership in the alliance. One of Croatia's poorest municipalities, Gracac experienced large outflows of its ethnic Serb population during the fighting for Croatia's independence in the 1990's. APAO and IRC Director also met with the mayor and library director, who expressed appreciation for U.S. embassy support to the Gracac public library over the past year. The lecture in Karlovac builds on recent lectures there on Barack Obama, Abraham Lincoln, and U.S. education. Following the presentation in Karlovac, the APAO gave a short interview to local television. (MCrnjakovic/KWetzel)  
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